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Application No. 10/749170
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1. (Previously presented) A stent comprising:
a plurality of closed serpentine circumferential bands including a first serpentine circumferential band connected to a second serpentine circumferential band by a connecting element, each closed serpentine circumferential band comprising a plurality of struts, struts which are circumferentially adjacent one another connected one to the other by a turn, each strut having a length, the struts generally increasing in length from a minimum strut length to a maximum strut length and then generally decreasing in length from the maximum strut length to the minimum strut length as the circumferential band is traversed in its entirety in a clockwise direction, the connecting element connected at one end to a turn of the first serpentine circumferential band and connected at the other end to a turn of the second serpentine circumferential band, the first serpentine circumferential band comprising at least one free turn that is oriented to face the second serpentine circumferential band and connected only to struts of the first serpentine circumferential band, wherein the struts of maximum length in the closed serpentine bands are generally longitudinally aligned with one another.
2. (Original) The stent of claim 1 wherein the struts of a closed serpentine band continually increase in length from a minimum strut length to a maximum strut length and then continually decrease in length from the maximum strut length to the minimum strut length as the circumferential band is traversed in its entirety in a clockwise direction.
3. (Original) The stent of claim 1 wherein the struts of maximum length are arranged in a longitudinal strip.
4. (Previously presented) The stent of claim 1, comprising at least one serpentine circumferential band having a different geometry from another serpentine circumferential band.
5. (Original) The stent of claim 1 wherein each closed serpentine circumferential band has a first end and a second end and the turns at only one of the first and second ends are in general circumferential alignment, the turns at the other end being non-aligned circumferentially.
6. (Original) The stent of claim 5 including closed serpentine bands having turns which are in general circumferential alignment at the first ends of the closed serpentine bands and turns which are non-aligned circumferentially at the second ends; and including closed serpentine bands

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having turns which are in general circumferential alignment at the second ends of the closed serpentine bands and turns which are non-aligned circumferentially at the first ends.

7. (Previously presented) The stent of claim 6 including two closed serpentine bands which are adjacent one another, one of the two closed serpentine bands having circumferentially non-aligned turns at the second end, the other of the two closed serpentine bands having circumferentially non-aligned turns at the first end, the circumferentially non-aligned turns of the two closed serpentine bands facing one another.

8. (Original) The stent of claim 1 including one or more closed serpentine bands whose turns at a first end are circumferentially non-aligned and whose turns at a second end are circumferentially non-aligned.

9. (Previously presented) The stent of claim 1 wherein each of the closed serpentine bands has circumferentially non-aligned turns at a first end of the band and circumferentially non-aligned turns at a second end of the band.

10. (Original) The stent of claim 1 wherein the struts of minimum length in the closed serpentine bands are generally longitudinally aligned with one another.

11. (Original) The stent of claim 1 wherein at least one connecting element comprises a curved portion.

12. (Original) The stent of claim 11 wherein at least one connecting element includes a peak and a valley.

13. (Original) The stent of claim 1, wherein a first connecting element has a greater length than a second connecting element, the first connecting element being circumferentially adjacent to the second connecting element.

14. (Previously presented) An unexpanded stent comprising a plurality of interconnected struts disposed in a tubular structure, a first portion and a second portion of the tubular structure including struts which generally increase in length to a maximum length and then generally decrease in length to a minimum length as the stent is traversed circumferentially about a longitudinal axis, a maximum length strut of the first portion being longitudinally aligned with a maximum length strut of the second portion, wherein the first portion is proximal to the second portion, the first portion connected to the second portion by at least one connecting element, the connecting element being nonparallel to a central longitudinal axis of the stent.

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15. (Original) The stent of claim 14 wherein the maximum length strut of the first portion is the same length as the maximum length strut of the second portion.
16. (Original) The stent of claim 14 wherein the maximum length strut of the first portion is shorter than the maximum length strut of the second portion.
17. (Previously presented) A stent comprising a plurality of interconnected struts defining a wall surface, the interconnected struts defining a plurality of serpentine bands including a first serpentine band, a second serpentine band and a third serpentine band, and a plurality of connecting elements, adjacent serpentine bands connected by at least one connecting element, the wall surface including a segment having a strip extending from one end of the segment to the other end of the segment and extending over a portion of the circumference of the stent, the strip characterized as having a plurality of rows of interconnected struts which are of greater length than the remaining struts of the segment, the interconnected struts formed from a single piece of material.
18. (Previously presented) A stent comprising a plurality of interconnected struts defining a wall surface, the interconnected struts defining a plurality of serpentine bands including a first serpentine band, a second serpentine band and a third serpentine band, and a plurality of connecting elements, adjacent serpentine bands connected by at least one connecting element, the wall surface including a segment having a strip extending from one end of the segment to the other end of the segment and extending over a portion of the circumference of the stent, the strip characterized as having a plurality of rows of interconnected struts which are of greater flexibility than the remaining struts of the segment, the interconnected struts formed from a single piece of material.
19. (Original) The stent of claim 18 wherein the struts of greater flexibility are longer than the remaining struts of the stent.
20. (Original) The stent of claim 18 wherein the struts of greater flexibility are thinner than the remaining struts of the stent.